

DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, January 26, 2009 - 5:00 p.m.
Mayor's Reception Room, 4th Floor, City Hall

Members Present: Warner Wirta, Ron Boshey, Tony LaDeaux, Ricky DeFoe, Donna Ennis, Renee K. Van Nett, Bea Kitto

Excused Absent: Dr. Joy Dorscher, Toni Dickenson, Michele Gordon, Dr. Robert Powless

Staff present: John Judd

Others present: See sign-in sheets.

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Introductions

Motion by Warner Wirta, seconded by Ricky DeFoe, to approve the agenda. The motion was unanimously approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 22, 2008 MEETING:

Motion by Warner Wirta, seconded by Ricky DeFoe, to approve the Duluth American Indian Commission minutes from the December 22, 2008 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM / OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Brad Clifford said he met with John Day regarding grants available to fund staff and activities of the DAIC as a non-profit because of the diminishing ability of the City to provide for the DAIC. There might be small initial funds for going after the larger long term funds. In most cases to qualify the DAIC would need to be its own non-profit or a more free standing entity. DeFoe said we must be careful as to the formation of a non-profit because of the control of the funds and possible conflict of interest with other groups. LaDeaux said there may be other existing organizations trying to access these funds. Day may have access for funding through the Urban Indian Advisory Committee. Clifford will continue to pursue the discussion with Day of going after "other" possible funds.

Wirta shared an article regarding a possible funding source for the DAIC.

Ernie Driver: Acknowledged the sage/smudge but wonders why there are no prayers or pipe ceremony to help the people's words to reach the "creator" and this left an empty feeling. Boshey said that he could bring an eagle feather for the meetings. Judd said some activities are proscribed by statute; however, an Eagle feather could be kept with the shell and sage material that is brought to every meeting. Wirta thinks the sage/smudge is good enough for a meeting like this. DeFoe understands Driver's words and appreciates

him bringing this up. If or when the Commission moves to their own (Indian Center) building additional ceremonies will be possible.

OLD BUSINESS:

Report from the Nominations Committee for DAIC Officers for 2009 and Election of Officers –

Motion by Donna Ennis, seconded by Warner Wirta to delay the election to the February meeting due to the number of Commissioners being absent.

DeFoe says that the people knew that there would be an election and we have a quorum and that delay could cause harm. Wirta said because of the Martin Luther King holiday the election was delayed to this week and we need the co-chairs to be here. Boshey said people knew there would be an election and we should not delay the election. Van Nett said we need to have a more balanced representation of members and the women who are missing tonight need to be here for the election. Wirta feels strongly that they need to be here. LaDeaux said he hears the arguments and what Boshey and Van Nett are saying, but hears from the people and we should move on to tend to the business of the people.

Motion to delay the election to the February meeting was defeated five to two.

LaDeaux has talked to DAIC members and others in the community and they have voiced support for Defoe for one of the co-chair positions and no other names were mentioned to him.

- Tony LaDeaux nominated Ricky DeFoe for the position of co-chair
- Donna Ennis nominated herself for the position of co-chair.
- Tony LaDeaux nominated Toni Dickenson for secretary.
- Donna Ennis nominated Michele Gordon for secretary.

A vote was taken on written ballots and the results were Ricky DeFoe and Donna Ennis will be the co-chairs and Michele Gordon will be the secretary for 2009.

Reports from 2008 Standing Sub-Committees -

Citizen (Police) Review Board (CRB) – LaDeaux had been talking about such a Board even before the death of David Croud but incidents like that continue. A major difference between the two main types of Boards is that they are “external,” with no Police members, or “internal” and include police officer members. The scope of support for the CRB has broadened to include other community groups such as the Afro-American and faith-based organizations. The City administration has been provided an outline of CRB. Irene Luna and other experts have been involved in developing this and other types of police accountability projects. LaDeaux has had no meeting with the Mayor and the process has been bogged down. However, last week the Men as Peacemakers facilitated a session to discuss the CRB. Bob Grydahl recommended forming a solid core group and pursuing funding to get started and then work on a developing a broad grass roots effort getting

everyone on board. Need to keep making the effort to keep the CRB from becoming too political and continue to reach out to get additional support especially from persons of color. LaDeaux is getting grant writers together to get apply for funds to conduct a CRB study for about \$60,000 and that is going forward.

Lake Superior Barrels – Wirta says that it is very important to continue to monitor the Red Cliff Band's efforts to address the Barrels. Defoe wants us to continue to have the issue on our agenda for updates on the process.

Spirit Mountain – The Commission officers need to write a letter to the Mayor encouraging him to appointment of DeFoe to the Spirit Mountain Authority Board.

Housing – Boshey remarked that decent and affordable housing is very important to the community and maybe a standing subcommittee will need to be formed following the February meeting with HRA.

Ennis is currently on the County's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness Committee

Children Justice Initiatives – Tony LaDeaux is willing to go but has not been notified of their meetings.

Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative – is a new project of St. Louis County, is looking at why youth of color are being incarcerated at a much higher rate. County Attorney Ford has agreed to participate and has a grant to look at this issue. They will make a presentation to the Commission in March.

DeFoe said it is important to secure money for culturally specific programs because if they are not culturally specific they will fail, especially with juveniles offenders.

Boshey said one thing he really watches the CDBG applicants for is culturally specific programming as part of the project.

Final approval of Work Plan and Schedule for 2009 – Keith Hamre, Community Development (CD) Division Manager, thanked the Commission for their past efforts and the development of the work plan because it helps him plan division staffing for the year. However, he is facing a thin staffing level and a very full work agenda for 2009 with many new programs coming down the road and the five-year Consolidated Plan and Community Development Block Grants. He thinks he can provide staff to six meetings in 2009: January February, and April, June, August, and November or December. CD can still supply logistic support notices, mailings etc., but on those meeting with no staff only the room will be provided.

NEW BUSINESS:

Establishment of Subcommittees and Liaison Assignments to Other Community Organizations for 2009 – Postponed until the February 23, 2009 Meeting

Discussion of DAIC Meeting Attendance Records, Membership and By-Laws

Attendance records for the last year were handed out.

The City Clerks office is resetting all City Commission memberships to March of the year and is asking everyone if they want to be reappointed to their respective Commissions. Everyone in attendance responded positively.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Boshey wants more outreach and notices.

Wirta – Great man elected and should change for the better because he has worked from the bottom up and in Community organizing.

Kitto – Does not agree with Wirta; does not agree with his policies. The CRB she really supports and prays for it.

LaDeaux – always concerned about youth. Fond du Lac school child has been abused for his disability. This child does well at cultural events.

DeFoe – Humbled and grateful by being made the co-chair and understands the problems and wants get involved and connect the DAIC better with people. Easy to Identify problems but hard to address. Race I (structural racism) is such a predictor of economic wellbeing this needs to be understood before we formulate policy to advise the City about issues and the challenge is to bridge the cultural information gap.

Van Nett – great to be involved and much to do to represent the people.

Ernie Driver – appreciates the work of the Committee and it recognizes the need and DAIC must remember they represent the people.

Mike Flaherty – In the historic movement of the Native People from the East to the West, Duluth and Spirit Mountain was #6 on the list of sacred places.

NEXT MEETING/DATE/LOCATION:

Monday, February 23, 2009 – 5:00 p.m., Mayor's Reception Room, 4th Floor, City Hall

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Boshey, seconded by Kitto, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.